

Belarus Jumpers Stay With Olympic Coordinator Bob Mathis and Family

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Leonid first saw a ski jumper when he was 17 1/2 years-old. He wanted to fly and experience the thrill of soaring through the air. He thought, "Why couldn't I be as they are?"

For four years he had great success on the U.S.S.R. National Team. Although he qualified with excellent scores for three Olympic Games, he wasn't able to compete in any of them because he was denied a visa.

"Today is much easier to have a visa," he said.

In 1980, Leonid "finished as an athlete and started as coach," Susan mentioned.

His wife is a lawyer in Minsk. He has another daughter who is 18 1/2 years-old attending the Academy of Sports in physiotherapy.

Susan, age 20, attends Belarusian State University in Minsk, studying philosophy and social science.

Belarus, with 10 million people, is 4,750 square miles smaller than Utah. It is landlocked between the Baltic Sea with Lithuania and Latvia to the north and the Black Sea with Ukraine to the south. It borders Poland on the west and Russia on the east. Its capital city, Minsk, is home to two million people and is the largest city in Belarus.

Bob and Barbara Mathis have hosted the team in their home for the past week.

"It has been a wonderful experience! They are just fine people,"

said Mathis. "It was a good thing they brought their own translator — it would have been much harder without her. The coach speaks French, German, and Russian. He was surprised that we only spoke one language. It really showed how wonderful and important language programs are in the schools."

This is beautiful. People are very friendly and hospitable.

**-Dimitri Schurko
Belarus Jumper**

"We've had a really good time visiting. They've been very polite and helpful guests," said Barbara. "They've especially enjoyed exploring new fruits and vegetables. Celery, oranges, raspberries, and home-canned peaches have been the biggest hits. They love potatoes and said they probably have more than 300 ways to fix them."

So, they were fascinated by the "Funeral Potatoes" Barbara fixed one night. They wanted to learn how to do it, but didn't quite understand the name. When they understood, they wanted to know who had died and if this was "some Mormon ritual."

The team has thoroughly enjoyed their stay in America. The time spent in Park City and in the Mathis home has been their first real contact with America and Americans.

Leonid stated that before, they were fairly isolated in their hotels and restricted in their activities. As a child, his teachers had taught him that capitalism was "very bad" and that the U.S.S.R. was against the U.S.A. and American's were not to be trusted.

Since then, he has been here and has said he "has seen that there is no situation like what they had told him about in school."

Leonid has changed his mind about America and the American people since staying with Bob Mathis.

"This is beautiful. People are very friendly and hospitable," Dimitri said.

This is truly the spirit of the Olympics, to bring people of different countries together, dispelling false assumptions, and promoting peaceful international relations. How marvelous that we have this opportunity to participate, even if only smiling and being helpful in the local grocery store!

Bob extends an invitation to the community to invite volunteers into their homes. They still need to find places for about 50 people.

If you are interested, please contact Lisa Larson at (435) 654-9992 ext. 436.

"We have very good athletes so we can still compete, even though we were so short of time to have good practice," affirmed Coach Leonid Chashchin.

He knows they could easily place gold, silver, or bronze in the 2002 Olympic Games given enough practice time.

In the 1988 Calgary Olympics, one of his athletes won a bronze medal. At this time Leonid is coaching two athletes -- Sergei Zakharenko and Dimitri Schurko. Susan Chashchin, his daughter, is their interpreter.

Zakharenko, now 26-years-old, has been skiing since the age of nine. He wanted to jump, but children in Belarus weren't allowed to jump.

"He especially enjoyed Latin American dancing," Susan said. "Dimitri has not so much practice, but he loves it very much, as his coach does. My father thought if he will train much he will have success."

Schurko's father is an army officer and his mother a homemaker in Minsk. He also has an older sister and brother.

Lack of snow is the biggest challenge they face. Nordic combined is not a popular sport in Belarus because of this, and consequently, the government does not provide much funding for their program. They do it because they love it!

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Girls Basketball *Lady Hawks Keep Things Close in Wasps 45-38 Win*

BY COURTNEY GRESSMEN

Wave Sports Editor

The Lady Wasps learned one thing last week. NEVER miss a practice, no matter the situation.

"We didn't practice on Tuesday because of the strike, and it hurt us," head coach Roger Pyper said after the Wasps 45-38 win over North Sanpete.

Even though the Lady Wasps defeated Region 8's Lady Hawks, Coach Pyper wasn't too pleased with the Lady Wasps play.

"Everything we did felt like we were walking in cement," he said. "We couldn't buy a bucket all night long."

The Lady Wasps only shot 25 percent from the floor the entire night and held the Hawks to 32 percent shooting.

"If we play like that against Ogden and against East on Friday, we will get blown away," added Pyper.

But despite everything the offense did, the defense made up for it. They out-rebounded the Hawks 28-7 just on defensive boards alone. Overall they out-rebounded them 50-16.

"Defense was just as good as it has been."

3A Champ

